

**Kentucky Environmental Quality Commission
Children's Environmental Health Report Press Conference
High Performance and Environmental Health Schools Forum**

Meeting Minutes

October 13, 2004

Isaac Shelby Elementary School
Louisville, Kentucky

EQC Commissioners Present

Lindell Ormsbee, Chair
Gary Revlett
Betsy Bennett, Vice Chair
Patty Wallace
Gordon Garner
Eugene Zick

Speakers/Representatives Present

Wayne Garfinkel, U.S. EPA
Art Smith U.S. EPA on-site coordinator
Russ Barnett, Kentucky Institute for Sustainable Dev.
Mike Muleirn, Jefferson County Schools
David Tollerud, U of L, School of Public Health
John Davies, Director, Division of Energy
Louis Huggs, Dept. of Education

Commissioners not attending

Laura Knoth

EQC Staff Present

Leslie Cole, Executive Director
Erik Siegel, Assistant Director
Frances Kirchhoff, Executive Secretary

Shelby Elementary School Tour

The Kentucky Environmental Quality Commission hosted a tour of the Shelby Elementary School from 10 a.m. to 11:30 to view the school's energy efficient heating and cooling system. Mr. Mike Mulerin with the Jefferson County School Systems coordinated the tour along with the architects of the school. The school opened its doors in 2004 and is considered one of the more environmental friendly schools in the district.

EQC Press Conference – Children's Environmental Health Report

At 1 p.m. EQC held a press conference to release its report on Children's Environmental Health in Kentucky. A copy of the press conference remarks are attached and made a part of these minutes. Present at the Press Conference were reporters from the Courier-Journal and Louisville television stations WHAS, WLKY, and WDRB.

Public Forum - High Performance and Environmental Healthy Schools in Kentucky

Lindell Ormsbee, Chair of the Environmental Quality Commission opened the EQC public forum on Green Schools at 1:00 p.m. and first introduced commission members and reviewed the role of EQC. Mr. Ormsbee next provided some opening remarks concerning the public forum. He noted that it was a real pleasure to be at Shelby Elementary School and the school is a good model on how to support healthy learning environments for our children. Shelby Elementary is considered one of the most environmentally friendly schools in Jefferson County School District. Mr. Ormsbee noted that the commission had an opportunity to tour the school this morning and were impressed with the school's environmentally responsive heating, air conditioning and ventilating systems. Such well-designed systems sends a powerful message to kids about the importance

their community places on education. Mr. Ormsbee introduced the Shelby Elementary School Principal Patti Cosby who welcomed the commission and audience members to the school.

Mr. Ormsbee next stated that healthy school environments promote both wellbeing as well as academic performance. He noted that unfortunately, not all schools are as environmentally friendly as Shelby Elementary. Each and every day our children are exposed to unhealthy conditions in schools where they spend much of their time during these formative years. These threats include exposures to pesticides, mold, radon, poor indoor air quality, diesel bus fumes and toxic chemicals.

Mr. Ormsbee said that EQC invited environmental, health and education officials to the meeting to discuss how we can improve environmental conditions in our schools in order keep students, teachers and staff healthy.

Wayne Garfinkel, U.S. EPA, Office of Children's Environmental Health Protection, Atlanta

The first speaker was Wayne Garfinkel with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Office of Children's Health Protection, Atlanta, Georgia. Mr. Garfinkel had a PowerPoint presentation about safe and healthy school environments. The presentation pointed out exposure issues such as

- School children are exposed to mold, pesticides, VOC emissions, mercury, PCBs, asbestos and lead just to name a few.
- There are nearly 6.3 million school-age children with asthma. Asthma is the leading cause of school absenteeism with possibly as many as 14 million missed days per year. Asthma episodes can be triggered by school environment contaminants.

Repercussions of not addressing environmental school risks include:

- Direct impact on children's health
- Reduced student and staff performance
- Higher energy costs
- Loss of funding tied to attendance
- Possible school closings
- Increased liability

The U.S. EPA has programs in place to help schools manage/prevent problems including:

- Tools for Schools
- Pest Management/Pesticides
- EnergyStar Program
- Clean School Bus
- Waste Wise
- Mercury
- Lead-free Drinking Water
- SunWise
- Asbestos
- PCBs

These EPA programs can be found at www.epa.gov/iaq/schools and www.epa.gov/schools .

Art Smith, U.S. EPA Onsite Emergency Response Coordinator

The next speaker was Mr. Art Smith, Onsite Emergency Response Coordinator for Kentucky with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

Mr. Smith said that each year he responds to 15 to 20 emergencies in Kentucky and 20 percent of those emergencies involve mercury spills at schools. Mr. Smith showed a video about mercury and its dangers. Mr. Smith noted that it is very costly to clean up a mercury spill. Even a small amount can be very costly. The work sometimes requires follow-up be done at students' and faculty's homes. Prevention is the best way to 'clean-up' a mercury spill. One way to prevent a spill is to replace mercury thermometers. He urged Kentucky to consider a mercury free school campaign to rid schools of mercury thermometers and mercury in school chemistry labs.

Jefferson County Green Partnership

The Chair next introduced Gordon Garner, Consultant; Russ Barnett, Kentucky Institute for the Environment and Sustainable Development; Mike Muleirn, Jefferson County Public Schools; and David Tollerud, School of Public Health at the University of Louisville and David Wicks, Jefferson County Public Schools to discuss the Jefferson County Green Partnership.

Mr. Garner said the Green Partnership is a community group that consists of the University of Louisville, Jefferson Metro Government, and the Jefferson County Public School System. The Green Partnership group is focused on issues in the community concerning environmental health, environmental management, and environmental education. Mr. Garner spoke mainly on the recent Green School initiative undertaken in Jefferson County as part of a partnership of a Green City. Mr. Garner's presentation gave an overview of the partners and the goals. The key to the success of Green City is the partnership. As partners the 'random acts of excellence' are collective. As partners the collective resources total 25,900 employees; 25,000 acres of land, 500 buildings, 120,000 students, 7,000 vehicles, \$33 million per year energy costs, and 12 million gallons of gas/diesel used.

Mr. Muleirn said that Louisville is a vibrant place and with the recent merge of city/county governments, it is now the 16 largest in the nation. He said partnerships like Green City will make a difference. It shows Louisville cares about a healthy environment. We can brainstorm together and come up with more ideas on improvements that benefit the whole community. We have three leaders empowering us to do that. This partnership makes Louisville an even better place.

The next speaker for the Green Partnership was Mr. Tollerud. His presentation highlighted two Green Partnership projects: a registry of public health issues and improved data collection. Mr. Tollerud sees a need for a public health registry. He suggested getting together a group of folks that already collect the information and prioritize the information. Collecting data on health issues from a variety of sources is necessary in order to obtain hard numbers on health effects and environmental issues.

The next speaker of the Green Partnership was Mr. Russ Barnett. His presentation named five things that must be done to move this project forward.

1. The University must set a bar and implement the program. The university must implement the program and show that it can save money and improve education.. These projects we think will demonstrate the value of Green City. We believe we are going to be able to save money, improve education, improve public health and it will snowball and gain support over time.

2. Institutionalize these factors. University presidents come and go, mayors come and superintendents come and go. Some how we are going to have to institutionalize this process if we are going to work together as a partnership. One way to do that is joint appointments.
3. Increase and expand participation in the Partnership.
4. Include new projects.
5. Incorporate a partnership model to be used across the state.

The final speaker for this segment was Mr. David Wicks. Mr. Wicks discussed a number of opportunities for schools to promote a Green City including incorporation outdoor classrooms in the curriculum and have schools adopt parks.

John Daviess, Kentucky Division of Energy and Louis Hugss Dept. of Education

The Chair next introduced John Davies, Director of the Kentucky Division of Energy, and Mr. Louis Huggs, Facilities Management with the Department of Education.

Mr. Davis began by saying the Division of Energy is a non-regulatory agency whose mission is to promote energy efficiency and renewable energy across the Commonwealth. This mission is supported by a formula grant from the U.S. Department of Energy and state appropriations.

Mr. Davis said that the Div. of Energy is works to promote high performance schools. High performance schools are schools that provide a better learning environment for students, teachers and communities; cost less to operate and work in harmony with the natural environment. About seven years ago the US Department of Energy started a program to promote the construction of high performance schools. The program initially focused on helping schools reduce the amount of energy they consumed. As the program matured other components of high performance schools were added that included lighting, acoustics, safety, security and water efficiency just to mention a few.

Studies conducted in 1999 and 2003 by the Heschong Mahone Group of California reflected that better environments enhance student learning. Its 1999 study showed that students with the most natural day lighting in their classrooms progressed 20 percent faster on math tests and 26 percent faster on reading tests in one year then those classrooms with the least day lighting. The EPA said that one in five schools have an indoor air problem. It has been estimate that in some buildings, the indoor air quality is 5 times worse than the outside air. The incidence of asthma in school children has increased 50 percent in the last 20 years.

We know that high performance schools deliver the following benefits:

- Reduced Environmental Impacts
- Increased Staff Satisfaction & Retention
- Reduced Operating Costs
- Increased Average Daily Attendance
- Improved Student Performance
- The Ability to Use the School as Teaching Tool

High performance school design takes into consideration not only the academic and economic impacts of design but also environmental impacts. Environmentally sound design elements are those that:

- Use renewable energy systems, such as solar, and energy efficiency technologies
- Incorporate resource-efficient building products and systems

- Promote water-conserving strategies
- Use less polluting transportation alternatives to include clean burning biofuels
- Establish recycling systems, and
- Incorporate environmentally sound site designs.

After a question/answer and discussion session Mr. Ormsbee thanked the speakers and audience for attending the forum. Mr. Ormsbee noted that EQC would consider these comments and draft its findings and recommendations in the near future.

EQC Next Meeting.

EQC next held a business meeting to discuss budget and other matters. Ms. Cole informed the commissioners that the next EQC meeting would be the annual meeting, November 16, at the Vest Lindsey House, Frankfort.

With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 4:05 p.m.



Signed Lindell Ormsbee, Chair

1/27/04

Date